

SHORT COMMUNICATION

SEEING *-ii* TO *-i*; PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SPECIFIC NAMES OF
SOME NEW ZEALAND BIRDS

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SUMMARY

Holdaway, R.N. (1990) Seeing *-ii* to *-i*; proposed changes to the specific names of some New Zealand birds. *New Zealand Natural Sciences* 17: 85-88.

The 1985 International Code of Zoological Nomenclature is ambiguous on the question of the correct ending for a species-group name formed from a modern person's name. I suggest that the Code regards the original use of the *-ii* ending as incorrect unless the author explicitly Latinised the person's name, or used a name, such as Linnaeus, which is normally Latinised. The present (1985) Code requires that such incorrect spellings be corrected. Names in the New Zealand bird checklist which are affected by this interpretation are indicated.

KEYWORDS: classification - taxonomy - birds - New Zealand.

INTRODUCTION

About 70 specific and subspecific names formed from personal names are in the 1970 edition of the *New Zealand Checklist* (Kinsky 1970). Nine of these were returned to their original spelling in 1980 when their endings were changed from *-i* to *-ii* (Kinsky 1980). Now, the spellings may have to be changed again. This is because a new Section, Article 33 (d), in the latest International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1985) states that the use of the *-ii* ending for a genitive noun whose *correct* (my italics) original spelling terminates with an *-i*, is an "incorrect subsequent spelling". Also, under Article 32 (a) of the new Code, the original spelling of a species-group name must be used *unless it is incorrect* (my italics), and if it is incorrect, it must, by Article 32 (d), be corrected.

Now, Article 32 (c) states that a name is incorrect if it contravenes any of Articles 27 to 31. Of these, Article 31 deals with species-group names formed from personal names; and its section (a) (ii) specifies the correct ending for those derived from modern names. If it is a man's name, as those changed in the 1980 Amendments all are, the "noun in the genitive case"

must be formed by adding *-i* to the stem of the name, the stem being that used by the original author. Under Articles 32 and 33, the names formed with terminal *-ii* must be changed (Article 31). The changes are "justified emendations" (Article 33 (b) (ii)). The names are still credited to their original authors, with the original date of publication, but the original spellings are "incorrect original spellings" (Article 32 (c)).

McDowall (1988, 1989) has suggested that, because 19th century authors learned Latin, it must be assumed that they would use the Latinised version of the person's name when constructing the specific epithet, even if there is no internal evidence in the publication that this has been done. I suspect that assuming that the original spelling is always correct is assuming too much: authors who used the *-ii* ending sometimes used *-i* endings for other names; for example, *Pterodroma solandri* (Gould, 1844), but *Apteryx owenii* Gould, 1847. Some 19th century authors, such as Rothschild, who certainly knew Latin, seemed always to use *-i*, as in *Petroica macrocephala dannefaerdi* (Rothschild, 1894). Other examples are *Euryanas finschi* (Van Beneden, 1875), *Anomalopteryx oweni* (Haast, 1886), *Emeus huttoni* (Owen, 1879), *Callaeas*

cinerea wilsoni (Bonaparte, 1851), and *Petroica (Miro) traversi* (Buller, 1872).

I suggest that the use of the modern version of the name as the root of the epithet should be assumed when there is no evidence to the contrary, such as normal use of the Latinised version of the name (as in Linnaeus for Linné), or when (as in the description of *Procellaria* [= *Pterodroma*] *Lessonii*) the author used only the modern version of the person's name in the text. The appropriate ending (-i) must then be applied.

In the description of *Procellaria Lessonii*, Garnot stated that "nous avons donné le nom de notre ami M. Lesson" (Garnot 1826). Again, John Gould, the gardener's son who 'rose from the ranks' as a self-taught taxidermist without the benefit of a public school education, named *Apteryx Owenii* "feeling assured that it can only be considered as a just compliment to Professor Owen" (Gould 1847). The Latinisation to Lessonius or Owenius may well be implied by the termination, but there is no other internal evidence that it was intended to Latinise either Lesson's or Owen's name.

If we base nomenclatural decisions on assumptions about the author's thoughts and what we perceive to have been his educational background, rather than on the written evidence, then interpretation of the Code will be even more difficult and its utility diminished. This would parallel the situation discussed by Olson (1987), who suggested that certain generic names had been selected in ways contrary to the rules of nomenclature "but to instate names that certain people happened to like better or regarded as more "familiar" than others." I agree with Olson (1987) in his view that "This only has the effect of introducing subjectivity into nomenclatural rule changes as well as systematic ones. The result is not just lack of stability for the names of the taxa involved, but loss of stability and universality of the rules of nomenclature themselves". I recommend that, in the absence of evidence of deliberate Latinisation, such as normal use of the Latinised form - e.g., Linnaeus, Fabricius - or the use of the Latinised name in the text, it should be assumed that a patronym was based on the modern version of a name as published in the same article.

Dundee & Smith (1989) use substantially the

same argument as that presented above in a paper published after this note was first submitted. They advocate a change to the code to remove the present ambiguity.

NAME CHANGES

The names in their correct form according to the interpretation discussed above, and their incorrect original spellings, are as follows (with their Checklist numbers).

2. *Apteryx oweni* Gould, 1847; originally *Apteryx Owenii* Gould, 1847.
3. *Apteryx haasti* Potts, 1872; originally *Apteryx Haastii* Potts, 1872. Oliver (1955) gave the original spelling as *haasti*.
33. *Pterodroma lessoni* (Garnot, 1826); originally *Procellaria Lessonii* Garnot, 1826. Oliver (1955) gave the original spelling as *lessoni*.
44. *Pterodroma cooki* (Gray, 1843); originally *Procellaria Cookii* Gray, 1843.
- 131b. *Rallus philippensis dieffenbachii* Gray, 1843; originally *Rallus Dieffenbachii* Gray, 1843.
152. *Charadrius leschenaulti* Lesson, 1826; originally *Charadrius Leschenaultii* Lesson, 1826.
173. *Gallinago hardwicki* (Gray, 1831); originally *Scolopax Hardwickii* Gray, 1831.
- 240a. *Xenicus longipes stokesi* Gray, 1862; originally *Xenicus Stokesii* Gray, 1862.

These name changes were made explicitly in the 1980 Amendments, apparently on an interpretation of the 1964 Code, which included a date limitation on changes to these endings (B. D. Heather, pers. comm.). Three other names which were not changed then would need also to be changed if the interpretation above is accepted, because of incorrect original and subsequent spellings. One of the species (175.1) was added to the New Zealand list in the 1980 Amendments; the other two were in the 1970 checklist. These three changes are as follows.

- 175.1 *Calidris bairdi* (Coues, 1861), and not *Calidris bairdii* (Coues, 1861); originally *Actodromas (Actodromas) Bairdii* Coues, 1861, Proc. Ac. Nat. Sci. Phil. p.194.
200. *Sterna bergi* Lichtenstein, 1823. The pa-

rentheses around the author's name in the 1970 New Zealand checklist are incorrect, because Lichtenstein described the species in the currently accepted genus, *Sterna*. *Sterna bergi cristata* Stephens, 1826; and not *Sterna bergii* or *Sterna bergii cristata*; originally *Sterna Bergii* Lichtenstein, 1823, Ver. Doubl. p. 80. According to Condon (1975), the correct name for the subspecies of *Sterna bergi* in Eastern Australia (and hence that most likely to straggle to New Zealand) is *S. b. poliocerca* Gould, 1837. The larger subspecies, *pelecanoides* from northern Queensland, is also a possible visitor. In a text note under *poliocerca*, *Sterna bergii cristata* (sic) Stephens, 1826, is listed as occurring in "south-eastern Asia to (?) the Philippines, Moluccas and Sunda Is."; and *S. b. poliocerca* Gould is *S. b. cristata* auct. Re-examination of the New Zealand records (specimens?) may show that the list entry should be: 200. *Sterna bergi poliocerca* Gould, 1837.

- !247. *Lalage sueuri* (Vieillot, 1818); and not *Lalage sueurii* (Vieillot, 1818); originally *Turdus Suerii* Vieillot, 1818, Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat. 20, p.270. *Suerii* is a misprint for *Sueurii* (after M. Lesueur - Mayr (1960)).

The changes in 1980, and many in the 1970 checklist, were made without more than a general comment in the Introduction on the reasons and justification. The use of textual notes in a checklist (as in Condon (1985)) helps other workers because changes or usages can be explained or justified explicitly, without the reader's having to do a literature search to find the appropriate reference. When there is no published reason to refer to, this convention also allows authors to justify their actions.

The New Zealand Checklist Committees have, of course, always considered the vexed question of *-i* versus *-ii* endings and the various rulings on these in successive Codes, in preparing the previous checklists and amendments. I have discussed the problem and the proposed changes with the Convenor of the present Checklist Committee, E.G. Turbott, who informs me that although the interpretation of Article 31

of the 1985 Code proposed here agrees with his own views, there has not been time for this to be thoroughly discussed by the committee, and that the 1980 Amendments have accordingly been followed in the forthcoming Checklist.

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